IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for ranking a set of documents, comprising:

- gathering context information from the documents;

- presenting the context information to a user;

- weighting of the presented context information by the user through user input~~gathering at least one rank criterion from the user for the context information~~; and

- ranking the documents, based at least in part on the user-weighted context information~~at least one rank criterion~~.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising revising the weighting of the user-weighted context information~~at least one rank criterion~~, in response to user input and re-ranking the documents based on the revised weighting of the user-weighted context information~~at least one rank criterion~~.

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting lexical affinities from the documents.

4. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting features from the documents.

5. (Original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting word frequency statistics from the documents.

6. (Original) The method according to any of Claims 1 to 5, further comprising the step of weighting of the context information by a weighting function.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 6, further comprising the step of utilizing discrete ranking levels in said weighting ~~step~~ by a weighting function.

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Cancelled).

12. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said step of ranking the documents comprises using the following ranking and weighted ranking equations or their equivalence:

ranking equation -

fd(x1, ..., xn) = Rd if x1, ..., xn are elements of Td, and

fd(x1, ..., xn) = 0 if x1, ..., xn are not elements of Td,

wherein Rd is an "absolute" rank value of a given document "d" that has resulted from a search, and Td = (x1, ..., xn) is a tuple of context terms that are contained in the document "d";

weighted ranking equation -

$$[2a\ f(x1,...,xa) + (a+b)\ f(x1,...,xa+b) + (a+b+c)\ f(x1,...,xa+b+c)] / (4a+2b+c)$$

wherein it calculates the relevance of a document with respect to the context terms x1, ..., xm when a, b and c are the number of terms that have been assigned a high (a), medium (b) and low (c) relevance and f(x1, ..., xa), f(x1, ..., xa+b) and f(x1, ..., xa+b+c) are partial relevance functions of the document with respect to a subset of the context terms.

13. (Currently Amended) A system for ranking a set of documents, comprising:

- means for gathering context information from the documents;
- means for presenting the context information to a user;
- means for weighting of the presented context information by the user through user input~~gathering at least one rank criterion from the user for the context information~~; and
- means for ranking the documents, based at least in part on the user-weighted context information~~at least one rank criterion~~.

14. (Currently Amended) A system according to Claim 13, ~~further comprising~~ wherein the means for ranking the documents is configured to re-rank the documents ~~is~~ based in part on an original ranking position of the documents.

15. (Original) A system according to Claim 13, further comprising means for extracting lexical affinities from the documents in order to obtain the context information.

16. (Previously Amended) A system according to Claim 13, further comprising means for weighting of the context information by a weighting function.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable program storage medium which stores a program for executing a method for ranking a set of documents, the method comprising:

- gathering context information from the documents;

- presenting the context information to a user;

- weighting of the presented context information by the user through user input~~gathering at least one rank criterion from the user for the context information~~; and

- ranking the documents, based at least in part on the user-weighted context information~~at least one rank criterion~~.

18. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 17, further comprising revising the weighting of the user-weighted context information~~at least one rank criterion~~, in response to user input and re-ranking the documents based on the revised weighting of the user-weighted context information~~at least one rank criterion~~.

19. (Original) The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 18, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting lexical affinities from the documents.

20. (Original) The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 18, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting features from the documents.

21. (Original) The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 18, wherein said step of gathering context information comprises extracting word frequency statistics from the documents.

22. (Original) The computer-readable program storage medium according to any of Claims 17 to 21, further comprising the step of weighting of the context information by a weighting function.

23. (Original) The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 22, further comprising the step of utilizing discrete ranking levels in said weighting step.

24. (Cancelled).

25. (Cancelled).

26. (Cancelled).

27. (Cancelled).

28. (Original) The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 17, wherein said step of ranking the documents comprises using the following ranking and weighted ranking equations or their equivalence:

ranking equation - fd(x1, ..., xn) = Rd if x1, ..., xn are elements of Td, and

fd(x1, ..., xn) = 0 if x1, ..., xn are not elements of Td, wherein Rd is an "absolute" rank value of a given document "d" that has resulted from a search, and Td = (x1, ..., xn) is a tuple of context terms that are contained in the document "d";

weighted ranking equation –

[2a f(x1,...,xa) + (a+b) f(x1,...,xa+b) + (a+b+c) f(x1,...,xa+b+c)] / (4a+2b+c)

wherein it calculates the relevance of a document with respect to the context terms x1, ..., xm when a, b and c are the number of terms that have been assigned a high (a), medium (b) and low (c) relevance and f(x1, ..., xa), f(x1, ..., xa+b) and f(x1, ..., xa+b+c) are partial relevance functions of the document with respect to a subset of the context terms.

29. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the weighting of the user-weighted context information~~at least one rank criterion~~ comprises a plurality of rating levels.

30. (Added) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the documents are ranked without communicating with a search engine that located the documents.

31. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 17, wherein the weighting of the user-weighted context information~~at least one rank criterion~~ comprise a plurality of rating levels.

32. (Added) The computer-readable program storage medium according to Claim 17, wherein the documents are ranked without communicating with a search engine that located the documents.